

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON OPERATION OF HOPPER DREDGES
IN THE SABINE-NECHES WATERWAY PROJECT

AUGUST - OCTOBER, 1998

On August 13, 1998, contract hopper dredges began work on the Sabine Pass Outer Bar, and Sabine Pass Jetty Channels of the Sabine-Neches Waterway Project. Dredging specifications required dredging an estimated 4,869,910 cubic yards (CY) of shoal material. The required depth of dredging was 44 feet below Mean Low Tide (MLT, Corps of Engineers Datum), with 2 feet of allowable overdepth dredging.

Dredging began on August 13, 1998, and was completed on October 7, 1998. Two dredges were employed under this contract, they were the *Mermentau*, and the *Ouachita*. The *Mermentau* worked from August 13, 1998 until August 31, 1998, dredging 400 loads. The *Ouachita* worked from August 22, 1998 until October 7, 1998, and dredged 933 loads of dredged material. A total of 1,333 loads of dredged material were collected and placed into Placement Area Nos. 3 and 4. Dredging was performed between Stations -180+00 and -214+88.3 along the Jetty Channel, and from 0+000 to 33+000 along the Outer Bar Channel. A total of 4,398,064 CY of material were excavated from within the channel.

The dredges were equipped with rigid draghead turtle deflectors, and 100% inflow screening with a 4-inch square mesh. NMFS-approved turtle observers provided 24-hour/day monitoring of dragheads and screens for each load cycle. The observers were employed by Coastwise Consulting under a subcontract to the dredging contractor, Weeks Marine, Inc.

No turtles were encountered during the performance of this dredging. A copy of the daily and weekly observer reports is enclosed.